AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

In the Specification

Please substitute the following paragraphs:

Page 2, line 9 – page 3, line 4:

As described above, sellers and buyers who look for counterparts to buy or sell articles have a variety of desires for trading dates such as the article delivery date, [[it]] the payment due date, and so on in accordance with individuals' circumstances. Conventional auction methods, however, determine a successful bidder without considering such trading dates. Thus, the conventional auction methods have a problem in that they fail to find a trading partner who offers a satisfactory trading date even though not at the highest price, fail to give the highest priority to a trading date [[for]] when looking for a trading partner, and fail to decide determine that the successful bidder is a partner who offers the most favorable trading date rather than the soonest one, if there are a plurality of partners who have offered the highest price. On the other hand, in a counter-auction, which has been conventionally used for reservations of air-line tickets and hotels, a buyer offers information related to terms such as desired flight dates, stay days, and so on, while sellers offer information related to terms such as flight dates, stay days, and so on that meet the requirements. The information on terms in this event does not refer to the terms for a trade, so that a payment must be made by the previously determined due date by a successful bidder. Thus, the conventional auction takes it for granted that participants bid for an article on price, so that, although a client is satisfied with his requirements in terms of the price, requirements other than price are not always met. Even if a client gives higher priority to a

certain requirement other than price, conventional auction methods have difficulties in giving the highest priority to [[the]] requirements other than price.

Page 3, line 16 – page 4, line 17:

Turning back to the discussion of auctions, some auction participants may desire to trade articles with a numerical value in accordance with, for example, the longest (or shortest), heaviest (or lightest), most (or least) articles, and so on due to a variety of circumstances. For example, a client who desires to purchase the longest possible article may desire to trade with a seller who offers the longest article irrespective of the price from among auction participants. In other words, some clients who participate in an auction may want to give a higher priority to a certain numerical value rather than the price as a bid condition in a trade. However, since conventional auction methods allow bidders to compete only regarding the price, such methods cannot be applied to an auction in which competition is made with some numerical value other than the price.

Also, some clients who request sale and purchase of articles in an auction may desire to reflect express their requirements in articles [[due to]] in a variety of conditions circumstances. For example, a client who wants to purchase an art object or an antique object may want to purchase such an object at the most reasonable price in consideration of various conditions such as the created year, the custody history, scratches and so on. As another example, for purchasing a personal computer through an auction, while a client has specific requirements concerning the image quality of an associated display, the quality, the performance and processing speed of the computer itself, and so on, he does not know in some cases which product (model numbers or the

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like) most meets his requirements. As a further example, for requesting an engagement with a private tutor, a client, though having requirements, does not know how to select a specific private tutor based on criteria. Therefore, clients must intuitively narrow down products or persons that meet the requirements to some degree, and bid off one of such narrowed products or services finally on price. There is also a problem that trading partners are virtually limited to those who have been registered in an auction. On the other hand, some sellers desire that an offered product be purchased by a buyer who most understands the value of the product.

Page 5, lines 8-12:

It is a second object of the present invention to provide an auction method, an auction system and a server that permit a client, who looks for a trading partner[[,]] with whom an article is to be sold or purchased, to find a trading partner who meets desired conditions in accordance with the client's circumstances with respect to trading dates such as the article delivery date, the payment deadline, and the like.

Page 5, lines 16-21:

It is a fourth object of the present invention to provide an auction method, an auction system and a server that can achieve the first object as well as permit a client who seeks a trading partner[[,]] with whom the client can trade an article or a service[[,]] to bid for the article or the service with a numerical value associated with the article or the service and find a trading partner who offers terms and conditions, including the numerical value, that meet desired requirements of the client.

Page 6, lines 3-11:

It is a sixth object of the present invention to provide an auction method, an auction system and a server that achieve the first object as well as permit a person who requests rescue when he has encountered a disaster or the like to use an auction system to request a rescue party, for rescue, who can reach the [[spot]] location of the rescue at the soonest possible time for rapid rescue activities.

In order to achieve these objects, and in accordance with the present invention, there is provided a method of conducting an auction for bidding [[off]] on an article or a service, or a person who is provided with receives provision of an article or a service, through a network, said method comprising:

Page 11, lines 17-20:

A first embodiment which embodies of the present invention will hereinafter be described with reference to FIGS. 1 through 14. FIG. 1 illustrates a time auction system for sellers and buyers to conduct auctions for articles through a network. In this example, an auction is held in which an article is bid upon [[for]] with time as an element.

Page 18, lines 3-19:

Further, not limited to manufacturers, the price slide setting type time auction may be used by clients who want to sell or buy a large number of articles efficiently or for selling or buying an article at an appropriate price for a particular trading period (for example, an article, such as a book, a music CD [[DC]] or the like, the value of which decreases over time from a release date). It should be noted that even with the price slide setting type time auction, the client can make an offer arbitrarily. For example, the price slide setting type time auction can set

priority rules that may be applied when there is only one article to preferentially determine that the successful bidder is a bidder who satisfies a single combination desired by the client even if a number of bidders satisfy all of a plurality of combinations with respect to a period and a price. The auction may have priority rules for determining a bidder for each period. Then, upon selection of an "OK" button 58 after required items have been entered on the screen T, bid condition data D4 including the data contents entered on the screen T is transmitted to the server 21. As appreciated, the items set on the screens R, S in FIG. 6, except for the bidding period, correspond to trade period conditions, while the items set on the screen T in FIG. 8, except for the bidding period, correspond to trade period conditions. Also, the article registration data D2 and the bid condition data D3, D4 constitute bid request information as bid information, and the screens R, S, T correspond to requesting screens.

Page 20, lines 1-15:

In step S60, a narrow-down condition is set by the options S5. For example, for a seller who wants to ensure funds as soon as possible, it is advantageous that an offered article is ~~bidden off by~~ sold to a trading partner who buys the article at a price higher than a desired price as long as a paying-in date is ensured. Alternatively, for a seller who wants to maintain an article at hand as long as possible, it is advantageous that the article is ~~bidden off by~~ sold to a trading partner who offers an article delivery date later than a payment date. Therefore, if a plurality of bidders exceeding a limited number of bidders compete with the trading date, the client selects "possible" in the item "condition offered from bidder" on the screen S in order for a bidder to offer information for narrowing the bidders down to those who offer more favorable conditions for the client. Then, when the client is a seller, the options "price" and "article delivery date" are selected, by way of example, as information offered by bidders (buyers) (see FIG. 6). Alternatively, when the client is a buyer, the options "price" and "payment date" are selected, by

way of example, as information offered by bidders (sellers). It should be noted that the entered contents on the screen R and the due date specified on the screen S correspond to the bid conditions.

Page 20, line 21 – page 21, line 10:

In next S80, slide prices are set. More specifically, prices corresponding to the respective previously set periods are set such that the prices changes from one to another in association with a transition of the periods from one to another. The price slide setting type may be used, for example, when a manufacturer (maker) uses the time auction for accepting advanced orders for a new product or predicting sales of the new product. ~~Set as the slide periods may be a~~ A new product release period, an intermediate sale period in which the product becomes less popular, and a final sale period before a next new product is released <u>may be set as the slide period</u>. Then, a standard price, a discounted price (for example, 10% discount), and a disposal value (for example, 30% discount) are set as the slide price for the respective periods. The price slide setting type facilitates the production plan since the manufacturer can accept advanced orders over a long period of time from a release day, and helps review the production plan by predicting the sales from resulting orders.

Page 57, lines 9-22:

The screen F is also provided with a setting frame 109 as illustrated in FIG. 26 for specifying conditions on a range and position for a position at which the customer wants a taxi to come to pick up him. The setting frame 109 is provided with a "no range" button 110 and a "with range" button 111. The customer may select the "with range" button 111 when he wants to

limit to those taxis which lie within a desired range from a taxi taking position. Beneath the respective buttons 110, 111, options 112 for selecting "nearest" and "furthest" are provided in the setting frame 109. When the customer selects "nearest" in the options 112, a taxi positioned nearest from a taxi taking position is ~~bidden off~~ bid upon, whereas when the customer selects "furthest,"[[,]] a taxi positioned furthest away from the taxi taking position is ~~bidden off~~ bid upon. A shorter waiting time is preferred when a customer requests for the allocation of a taxi, so that the selection of "nearest" is taken for granted. Therefore, if a positional condition is spontaneously limited from the characteristics of a particular service, the options 112 may be eliminated. Here, the taxi taking position specified by the customer corresponds to a desired value.

Page 70, lines 9-11:

In S713, narrow-down processing is executed. Specifically, a bidder who has offered the position which most meets requirements of the user (client) is ~~bidden off~~ selected as a trading partner.

Page 114, line 16 – page 115, line 6:

On the screen O, a bid-off button 175 at a right end position corresponding to an article (or a service) ranked at the first position as a successful bid candidate is displayed as selected. When the client wants to individually view an evaluation point for each key word and changes an article to be ~~bidden off~~ bid upon to an article at a lower rank candidate, the client may select a right end position corresponding to the article to switch the position at which the bid-off button

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175 is selected to the position of the selected article. Then, the client selects an OK button 176 with the bid-off button 175 being selected. On the other hand, for a correction or a cancel, a correction button 177 may be selected. As the client selects an article to be ~~bidden off~~ bid upon and selects the OK button 176, the associated bid-off data is transmitted to the server 21, which, upon receipt of the bid-off data, notifies both the seller and the buyer of the establishment of the trade. Of course, information on a successful bidder may only be transmitted to the client. In other words, the server 21 determines the bidder who has obtained the highest total evaluation point as a successful bidder, and notifies the client to that effect together with details on the evaluation.

Page 150, line 13 – page 151, line 6:

In S2140, it is determined whether or not a successful bidder has been determined. The evaluation result display screen O is continuously displayed (S2120) until a successful bidder is determined, and the procedure flow continues to step S2170 when a successful bidder is determined. The client determines a trading partner while referencing individual evaluation points for the respective evaluation items as well as the total evaluation points and further referencing other information offered by the bidders. On the screen O, the bid-off button 175 is displayed as selected at a position corresponding to an article (or a service) at the first place of the candidate ranking. When the client wants to individually view an evaluation point for each key word and changes an article to be ~~bidden off~~ bid upon to an article at a lower rank candidate, the client may select a right end position corresponding to the article to switch the position at which the bid-off button 175 is selected to the position of the selected article. On the other hand,

for a correction or a cancel, a correction button 177 may be selected. When the client eventually determines a trading item (trading partner, an article or a service) after changing the selection of the bid-off button 175 as required on the screen O, the client selects the OK button 176. In response, the associated bid-off data is transmitted to the server 21 through the Internet N, which determines that a successful bidder has been determined, followed by the procedure flow continuing to S2170.

Page 175, lines 13-21:

On the screen O, a bid-off button 175 at a position corresponding to an article (or a service) ranked at the first position as a successful bid candidate is displayed as selected. When the client wants to individually view an evaluation point for each key word and changes an article to be ~~bidden off~~ bid upon to an article at a lower rank candidate, the client may select a right end position corresponding to the article to switch the position at which the bid-off button 175 is selected to the position of the selected article. For a correction or a cancel, a correction button 177 may be selected. Then, the client selects an OK button 176 when he determines an article to be ~~bidden off~~ bid upon. In response, the associated bid-off data is transmitted to the server 21 which notifies both the seller and the buyer of the establishment of the trade.

Page 210, lines 8-23:

In the respective embodiment described above, an element other than the price may be limited ~~not to mean~~ to not include a bid conducted with the element in the form of a mere conversion of a price[[,]] and substantially in the form of a mere price bid. For example, in the

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position auction, the element other than the price does not include those which are mere ~~conversion~~ conversions from the price[[,]] and with which a bid is conducted with the price. For example, the element other than the price does not include those used in a bid in the form of a mere alternative of the price, such as a bid conducted with an element having a proportional relationship with the price. However, an auction method ~~which has a meaning of~~ using an element other than the price is included, such as that which cannot be said to be a mere alternative of the price, and produces inherent effects ~~other than the price eventually~~ by conducting a bid with the element other than the price. For example, a ~~higher~~ rate is related to ~~burdened in accordance with~~ a distance over which a taxi goes to receive a customer, and it is out of the question to conclude that such a method is not included in the invention, ignoring the effect of reducing a waiting time of the customer on the basis of such a reason that bidding of the nearest taxi leads to a lower rate, and so on. With the employment of such a method, it is possible to satisfy more ~~satisfy~~ requirements other than the price.